CHAPTER 7

REPORTS AND FORMS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Reports control is a management tool designed to ensure efficient response to local and higher echelon requirements for information. Each activity is required to establish a continuing and systematic appraisal of reports.

The contents of your files are of such significance that our Congress has passed laws governing their disposition and fixing penalties for unauthorized destruction. These laws apply to unclassified as well as classified matter.

This chapter gives you a basic understanding of the *Department of the Navy Information Requirements (Reports) Management Program*, SECNAVINST 5214.2 series. This instruction gives direction for an effective reports management program.

REPORTS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A single office within each Navy command should be designated as the reports control point to review and process existing and proposed reports, reporting systems, and their related directives. Normally, the reports control manager is a function of the ship's secretary (afloat) or the administrative officer (ashore), with a senior YN as reports control point supervisor. As a YN2, you may be that senior YN. A reports manager is responsible for the following tasks:

- Reviewing reports for conformance with reporting standards
- Approving reports by assigning report control symbols (RCSs) or citing exemption authority
- Conducting periodic reviews of individual reports
- Maintaining management data on reports required and prepared by the organization

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

Reports should be reviewed before their expiration to determine if they continue to meet requirements efficiently. The report originator performs this review 60 days before the third anniversary of the issuance date. The report must include complete rejustification of the requirement. Reports not approved for extension are **automatically cancelled** on the third anniversary date and should be omitted from any subsequent effective reports listing.

REPORTS CANCELLATION/ REVALIDATION PROCEDURES

If an information requirement is to be cancelled, a change transmittal to the existing directive canceling the requirement should be prepared. If the information requirement remains valid, a revised directive or change transmittal should be submitted within 60 days of the expiration date. The revised directive or change transmittal should explain the revalidation and extend the approval period for a maximum of an additional 3 years.

REPORTS ANALYSIS

The construction of report items should obtain all information needed. Each item must satisfy a current need or known future requirement. The collection of information to meet some possible future need is not justified. The recipient of the report must use each reported item of information. Negative reports should be required only when they serve an established objective.

Arrangement of Report Items

Report data items should be arranged in a logical format that allows the preparing organization to complete the report easily.

Source of Information for Report Items

Information for report items should be obtained from the organization that can furnish precise, usable information in the easiest way.

Controlling Copy Distribution

Distribution of completed reports is based on a "need-to-act" or "need-to-know" basis. Distribution of courtesy copies is prohibited.

Timing Submissions

The submission of reports is based on the following timing and frequency requirements:

MINIMUM FREQUENCY. The maximum time possible between submissions.

AS-REQUIRED REPORTS. Information available and furnished on request.

SITUATION REPORTS. Information required on the occurrence of an event or situation or a change in condition.

REALISTIC DUE DATES. Sufficient time allowed for adequate compilation between the end of the period covered and the due date.

DEFINITIONS

Various reports are required to provide information about distribution, training, promotion planning, statistical purposes, and so forth. The following are definitions of the various reports used to provide such information:

REPORT. A collection of data or information used to determine policy; to plan, control, and evaluate operations and performance; to make administrative determinations; or to prepare other reports. The data or information may be prepared or transmitted by any method; for example, it may be a narrative, statistical, or graphic report prepared on magnetic tape or any other media.

AS-REQUIRED REPORT. Information collected, stored, retrieved, and submitted when requested.

STATUS REPORT. An interim report explaining the amount of work completed or to be completed on an established report.

SURVEY or PERSONNEL SURVEY. An organized effort to obtain information from persons about themselves, their attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, opinions, or interests. The acquisition of such information is not a normal administrative requirement internal to the command.

ONE-TIME REPORT. A report prepared only once. One-time reports should be assigned a report control symbol according to the standard subject identification code (SSIC) using the letters **OT** as the suffix.

RECURRING REPORT. A report that conveys essentially the same type of information at prescribed intervals.

SITUATION REPORT. Reports prepared upon occurrence of a specified event.

INFORMATION REQUIREMENT. The expression of need for data or information to carry out specified and authorized functions. These functions require the establishment or maintenance of forms, formats, or reporting or record keeping systems, whether manual or automated.

REPORT CONTROL SYMBOL. An organization abbreviation combined with an SSIC and a numeric suffix that signifies a report has been approved.

REVISED REPORT. An established report that changes in any way. Revised reports have to be cleared by the reports control manager.

COMPUTER-GENERATED REPORTS. Reports generated by processing data residing in a computerized database.

EXEMPT REPORTS. Reports that are not subject to reports documentation and symbolization procedures.

INTERNAL REPORT. A report that remains within one organization for its own use.

LICENSED REPORT. A report that has been justified by the originator, reviewed and approved by the reports control manager, and assigned a report control symbol or an exemption.

UNLICENSED REPORT. A report that has NOT been justified and NOT assigned a report control symbol.

REPORT CONTROL SYMBOLS

A report control symbol (RCS) is assigned by the reports control manager. It indicates that the report has been reviewed and approved as a valid requirement and that the respondents have the responsibility of providing the requested information.

The RCS of the highest authority responsible for the submission of the report should appear on the report. For example, if a DD symbol is assigned to a report, all responding commands will use the DD symbol, expiration dates as assigned, and the associated report title. Reports control managers may not substitute their own symbol for the RCS on a report from higher authority. Commands are not required to respond to unlicensed or expired reports.

It is important to note that, although similar in nature, RCs and forms identification codes are separate entities. Even though the originator and SSIC of both may be the same, the consecutive number in each may not coincide. The same holds true for the relationship between the report and its requiring directive.

INVENTORY OF REPORTS

An accurate and current inventory of recurring reports is essential for the effective operation of an activity. The reports control manager maintains this inventory. A case folder must be maintained on all reports for which an activity is responsible.

The reports control manager should maintain a close working relationship with points of contact within the command who may be aware of new or revised reports requirements. Points of contact may include the directives control point, forms manager, mail room, or publications review office.

ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

After all recurring reports have been inventoried and classified by an RCS, one folder for each report should be filed in a report case file. Every folder should contain the following documents:

- A completed copy of the Reports Analysis Data, OPNAV Form 5214/10
- A copy of the report form, format, or a copy of the report
- A copy of the document requiring the report
- Related papers, such as source records, analyses, surveys, and memos pertaining to the report

Folders within the case file should be arranged chronologically by report control symbol.

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

Established reports required by the command must be given a follow-up review to determine whether they continue to be needed. If they are needed, then the review must determine whether they continue to meet all the requirements in the most effective manner. Elements used to make this determination will include changing needs and situations, relationship to other reports, possible consolidations, and new developments in reporting devices and techniques.

A report must be reviewed before its expiration to determine if it continues to meet requirements efficiently. The report originator conducts this review 60 days before the third anniversary of its administrative issuance, and the report must include complete rejustification of the requirement.

One effective way of providing an annual review of every report required by a command is to combine the review with the annual review of command directives. Each required report has a command directive as its basis. Therefore, a complete review of that directive 3 months before the anniversary month of its issuance date would provide the opportunity for an in-depth look at any report listed in the directive. (This is also an excellent time to accomplish a review of the local forms used for these reports.)

In a review of the local forms, a copy of the report form and a blank OPNAV Form 5214/10 covering the report should be provided to the reviewing office along with the applicable directive. A decision to modify, cancel, or continue the existing directive would, likewise, include a similar decision concerning any report or form required by the directive.

During the origination or revision of directives, the reports control point supervisor should verify the approval of any report required by the directive. The reports control manager and the forms manager should approve any required report while the rough directive is still in the review process. This is also the time for the reports control point supervisor to verify that the RCS and report title are specifically included in the directive.

When a directive is to be cancelled, the control symbol and title of any report previously required by that directive are included in the canceling notice or in the cancellation paragraph of the superseding instruction. Cancelled reports must be routed through the forms manager so that obsolete report forms can be removed from case files.

PUBLISHING LISTS OF REPORTS

The reports control office should publish and distribute a list of current and cancelled reports required or prepared by the command. Organizational units within the command are required to review the list and notify the reports control office of any discrepancies. Revised lists should be published annually, with quarterly supplements as necessary.

List of Current Reports

The published list of current reports should include the following information:

- RCS
- Title of the report
- Form number or format
- Frequency of submission
- Document requiring the report
- Specific office within the organization or the unit outside the organization requiring the report
- Specific office(s) that prepare(s) the report

One copy of the list (usually a command notice) should be maintained as a master by the petty officer assigned to monitor reports submissions.

List of Cancelled Reports

A list of all reports cancelled during the period covered by the issuance should be appended to each revised list of current reports and quarterly supplements. The document that originally required the cancelled report should also be listed.

An inventory of the reports (and forms) case file should always be made, no matter how efficiently the master list and case file were kept current. This inventory should be made before a new effective list of current and cancelled reports is issued.

OVERDUE REPORTS

The most elaborate reports management system that could be devised is only as good as the actions taken to make sure reports are submitted and received on time. The timeliness of reports can be achieved through the use of a tickler system.

Tickler System

The tickler system provides an index to the required reports and shows the submission date of each. The manner in which a tickler file is made up may vary with each command. It is suggested that you use 5-inch by 8-inch cards with separators or tabs marked as follows:

DAILY
WEEKLY (January through December)
MONTHLY
QUARTERLY
SEMIANNUALLY (1 through 31 for use with current month)
ANNUALLY
WHEN OCCURRING (Situational)

The tabs or separators may be used as needed to tailor the file to the activity. The separators are generally placed in a 5-inch by 8-inch box (called the **tickler box**). The report tickler file requires daily attention if it is to be an effective aid.

In addition to being used as a reminder of report dates, the tickler file may be used as a reminder of action required for **incoming mail** (such as a reply that may be required on an incoming letter) or **nonreceipt of a reply** to an outgoing letter from your command.

An easier and more economical reminder of action required on incoming mail is to attach the third copy of the routing slip to the mail. In the case of outgoing mail, filing a copy of the correspondence itself in the appropriate place in the tickler box serves as a reminder of action required.

Notice to Departments

To make sure departments submit all reports when due, a command should have a system for alerting them in sufficient time before the actual due date. This may be done in one or both of the following ways:

- Adding a list of all the reports due the following week to the command's weekly list of overdue reports/correspondence. This is a recommended practice for improving timeliness in reports submissions.
- Providing a reports tickler card to offices preparing reports. This can stimulate good two-way communication between the departments concerned and the reports control office.

FORMS

As a YN3 or YN2, you should be acquainted with the Navy's forms management system. This system is set up to design, order, and account for forms used by your command. As you become more senior and begin to take on more responsibility, the management of forms within a command may become part of your duties.

For the Navy's purpose, the term **form** is defined as all printed or duplicated material, regardless of the method of reproduction, that contains predetermined blank spaces for the insertion of information by hand, typewriter, or other business machine.

IMPORTANCE OF FORMS

The need for forms is well established. They are vital to the effective management of your office and your command because they provide information for formulating policy, controlling and improving operations, and evaluating performance. Operations often depend on forms. Forms guide the movement of materials, the performance of services, the authorization for expenditures, and the payment of money. They provide a basis for clerical and executive actions; they serve as historical references and records. They are the orders, financial accounts, and portions of the reports by which government operates.

OBJECTIVES OF FORMS MANAGEMENT

The objectives of forms management at the command level are as follows:

- To make sure necessary forms and related procedures are developed and designed to make the maximum contribution to the command's mission
- To eliminate unnecessary and duplicate forms and, as appropriate, consolidate those serving like or similar functions using, wherever practical, the form of the higher echelon.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF FORMS MANAGEMENT

The *Department of the Navy Forms Management Program*, SECNAVINST 5213.10 series, sets forth principles, techniques, and methods in establishing and administering the forms management program; improving forms and related procedures through analysis; designing forms to Navy standards; and training personnel in forms management. It is considered to be the primary guide for forms design standards and criteria for the Department of the Navy (DON).

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) exercises overall supervision of the forms management program for the DON, according to the policies and standards established by the Secretary of the Navy. The CNO's responsibilities are the following:

- Develop and coordinate the overall program
- Serve as the single point of contact and liaison with the Office of Secretary of Defense, other components of the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and other federal agencies on forms management matters
- Provide related technical guidance and assistance to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy and the DON staff offices
- Develop and publish concepts, guides, techniques, and information for conducting the program, including standards of design and analysis of forms and related procedures

Under the CNO, the Chief of Naval Material, and the Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command, the Document Automation and Production Service (DAPS) has the following responsibilities:

- Provide for the printing and procurement of forms, including liaison for stocking and distribution
- Recommend consolidation or standardization of existing forms wherever economy can be realized
- Provide forms design service to ashore activities and fleet commands that do not have such capability or available service
- Provide forms design training for the DON

Each command is responsible for establishing and maintaining a forms-management program. Forms management positions must be established and staffed with trained personnel. A clearing point must be maintained to review and approve proposed forms, formats, and directives or other issuances distributing or requiring forms. In addition, design assistance and guidance for forms and related procedures must be provided.

ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING THE FORMS MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

As the first step in establishing the function in the activity, the CO issues a directive that states the objectives of the function. The CO assigns responsibility to one organizational unit for its administration.

Locating and Staffing a Forms Management Office

The forms management office should be established on the same level, and usually within the same organizational unit, as other management functions for the following reasons:

- The establishment of this office is, and should be considered as, an integral part of the activity's total management improvement effort.
- A study of forms normally involves change in procedures, records systems, and reports or other phases of management improvement.
- Forms management can and should complement other management improvement programs.
- The analytical capabilities required for forms analysis can be found most readily in an organizational unit responsible for total management improvement.

The number and complexity of the forms and related procedures in an activity determine the number of personnel assigned on a full-time or part-time basis to the forms management function.

In a large activity, it may be beneficial to appoint a forms management representative from each department, division, or other organizational component. Such representatives act as liaison with the forms management officer. These representatives assist the forms management officer in various capacities. They may act as liaison for the submission of proposed new or revised forms. They may be responsible for assisting in reviews and analyses of existing and proposed forms and related procedures within their organizational units. They may often design the final form. The operational knowledge provided by the representatives in their liaison duties speeds up the process of analysis and helps ensure division acceptance of proposed improvement.

Operating the Forms Management Function

As the first step in the operation, the forms management office must obtain a complete picture of the forms situation of the activity. To do this, the forms management office collects copies of and information on all forms used in the activity. The forms include those initiated by the activity and those prescribed by other sources and used by the activity. These records are numbered according to the Department of the Navy File Maintenance Procedures and Standard Subject Identification Codes, SECNAVINST 5210.11 series, and arranged by function in a file. The file brings together data in one place to simplify the evaluation, combination, improvement, and elimination of forms.

Reviewing New or Revised Forms

Analysis is made not only of existing forms, but also of all proposed new or revised forms. The proposed forms and the directives prescribing them or instructions for their use are submitted to the forms management office for review before issue.

The forms management office should stress its readiness and ability to assist in the developmental stages of the new or revised form. By assisting in the initial development of the form along with related procedures, the forms management officer can more readily understand problems that may arise and contribute to the development of solutions.

Continuing Review of Forms

The forms management plan emphasizes a **continuing** review of forms and related procedures, preferably on an annual basis. To establish the most effective new forms and procedures and to analyze and improve existing forms and procedures, follow these steps:

- Get all the facts; that is, collect all pertinent information concerning the form and procedure under study.
- Subject the facts to detailed analytical questioning.
- Evaluate the results of such questioning and develop the necessary solution to the problems revealed by the questioning.
- Install and test the solutions.
- Follow up to see that the recommended solutions are continuing in effectiveness.

FORMS MANAGEMENT RECORDS

Analyzing forms and their related procedures requires the use of an accurate and workable record of forms in the activity. This record is not the complete solution to effective forms management operation, but rather a tool with which information can be obtained and systematic analyses can begin.

Collecting Samples of Forms

As discussed earlier, copies of all forms used in the activity need to be collected. The most satisfactory method of collecting the samples is by obtaining them from all organizational components, despite the fact that there will be duplicates.

Organizational components should submit a copy of each form they use, both local and nonlocal. It is essential that the organizational units write on each form the name of the office using the form and the estimated annual usage. They should also attach copies of any directives that prescribe the form or furnish information for its use. If the instructions for the form are part of a manual or publication, only the reference to the manual or publication need be noted.

Filing Forms by SSICs

When samples of forms have been collected, they are identified and filed. The SSIC is used to identify and number all the forms. When the forms are identified and assigned SSICs, they should be placed in one file. Identifying and filing forms by subject or function bring together all those having similar problems. This permits comparison of proposed and existing forms with all other similar or related forms. Thus, forms may be consolidated, standardized, or eliminated if duplication exists.

Activities will gain maximum benefits from the file by assigning one person the job of keeping the file up to date. That person can then add new or revised forms and weed out obsolete ones.

ARRANGEMENT AND CONTENTS

Local forms should be arranged and filed in numerical order by SSICs. Nonlocal forms are filed in folders labeled with their basic SSIC; that is, all nonlocal forms in the 4700 subject group are filed together in one folder. The folder is then placed in numerical order in the file drawer.

A separate folder is prepared for each local form. It is labeled with the originator's authorized abbreviation, the SSIC, the consecutive number, and the title of the form. For example:

SIMA PAC 4700/1-Job Order

As mentioned previously, the folders are filed numerically by SSIC and consecutive number behind the folders containing nonlocal forms in the same subject group. Dividers or dummy folders may be labeled and used to separate subject groups for which nonlocal forms are not available.

Each folder of local forms should contain the following:

- A copy of the directive prescribing the form or furnishing instructions for its use (or a reference to the directive if it is in manual form or otherwise unavailable)
- A copy of the approved design
- Printing requisitions and specifications
- A copy of the printed form and any subsequent revisions
- A reproducible copy, if pertinent
- A record of the cost of the form; that is, printing, designing, and procedural analysis costs
- Related papers, analyses, surveys, or memoranda pertaining to the form or related procedures; information on contemplated revisions; or other data

CROSS-REFERENCE

Regardless of your efforts to consolidate related information into one form to serve a variety of purposes or functions, two or more forms may still be required. Under this condition, similar SSICs will probably be used (though not required) for each form. Periodic review or the revision or cancellation of any one of these related forms may require similar action with the others. A cross-reference to such related forms filed in their respective folders will prove extremely helpful.

DISCONTINUED FORMS

When a form becomes obsolete or is replacd by higher authority, the folder is transferred to a separate file. This file is organized in the same manner as the active file; that is, it is arranged by SSIC in numerical order. The reason for the discontinuation of the form is noted in the record before the folder is placed in the discontinued file. Disposition of these files is governed by the *Navy and Marine Corps Records Disposition Manual,* SECNAVINST 5212.5 series.

SUMMARY

Personnel in organizational units with whom you have contact concerning reports control and forms management should be aware of your desire to assist them as well as your need for their input and cooperation in carrying out your functions. Reports and forms management cannot be accomplished by one person; it requires the active involvement of everyone from the CO down to be effective.